Status of Day Care in Canada 1989

National Child Care Information Centre
Child Care Programs Division

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Preface

Status of Day Care in Canada (1989) is intended to present to Canadians a general overview of day care services in Canada.

The study was undertaken by the Social Service Programs Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, with the cooperation of provincial authorities and many voluntary organizations.

If you have any comments on *Status of Day Care in Canada (1989)*, please contact the National Child Care Information Centre, Social Service Programs Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5.
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Major Findings

Increase in Day Care Spaces

The National Day Care Information Centre, now called the National Child Care Information Centre, first began publishing the number of full-time day care spaces in Canada in 1973. Since then, there has been a ten-fold increase. With only a couple of exceptions, each subsequent year has shown a rate of growth between 10% and 16%.

The number of full-time day care spaces in Canada in 1989 is 298 083. This is an increase of 34 457.

Centre care spaces increased by 27 104.

Family day care spaces increased by 7353.

This significant rate of growth, as indicated in Table 1, has continued into 1989.

The overall rate of growth was 13.07%.

The rate of growth for family day care over 1988 was 23.84%.

The rate of growth for centre day care over 1988 was 11.64%.

Age Groups Served by Day Care Programs

As indicated in Table 2, the availability of day care services differs according to the age of the child.

As in the past, day care centre spaces are primarily being used by children between the ages of three and six years. The spaces available to this age group account for 158 615, or 61.03% of the total day care centre spaces.

Only 34 065, or 13.11%, of centre spaces are filled by children under the age of three. This contrasts with the Family Day Care program, where there are 16 147 spaces (42.28%) serving children under three.

School-age day care spaces continue to have more priority than in earlier years. There are now 75 083 spaces for this age group, compared with 58 007 in 1988. School-age day care now constitutes 25.19% of the day care spaces. However it should be pointed out that this figure is not typical for most provinces. Quebec has almost 30 000 of the 75 000 school-age spaces.

Sponsorship of Day Care Centres

In 1968, 75% of all day care spaces were under commercial auspices. The percentage of commercial spaces has dropped over the years, but for the past few years has been fairly stable – between 38% and 43%.

The non-profit centre spaces grew by 24 363 spaces and now represents 64.73% of the total day care centre spaces.

The commercial sector grew by 2742 centre spaces and now represents 35.27% of the center spaces.

Tables 3 and 4 show the distribution and relative growth of day care spaces under different types of sponsorship.

Day Care Spaces by Province

Table 5 shows full-time centre spaces and family day care spaces by province, and Table 6 provides provincial comparison by auspices.

Full-Time Day Care Spaces in Canada in Relation to the Number of Day-Care-Age Children of Parents in the Labour Market

The mandate for Status of Day Care in Canada has been to show the year-by-year growth patterns in day care.

However, there has always been some interest in relating these findings to the degree of unmet need. Obviously, the data provided by the provinces does not lend itself directly to this type of analysis. The early Status of Day Care in Canada reports compared the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children of mothers who were in the labour force in order to address this question roughly. The problem with this approach is that many mothers work part-time and do not require a full-time day care space. This creates an exaggerated impression of the degree of unmet need.

On the other hand, if only the numbers of children of two working full-time parents are used, there may be built-in underestimations of the need, in that a parent working 20 hours a week would not likely find a part-time day care space to match the hours needed for care.

Consequently, Status of Day Care in Canada now uses a format which presents four separate compilations estimating the percentage of children that can be served by existing day care spaces. The four separate compilations are for children 0-18 months; between 18 months and 36 months; between the ages of 3 and 6; and between 6 and 13 years.

It is important to note that the above-mentioned approach compares only the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children by various ages where the parents are involved in one of the four categories. It should not be construed to relate to the numbers of children whose parents would choose a formalized day care setting if it were made available.

Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 relate the four age categories and parental work situations to the percentage of full-time day care spaces available.

The existing evidence of parental preference is sketchy at best, but it does seem to suggest that about 50% of those not using formal care would do so if provided the opportunity. However, a number of variables need to be researched before definitive statements can be made.

Another consideration – a significant one, according to some field observations – is the impact of full-time kindergarten and part-time junior kindergarten in the school system on the demand for day care.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of spaces available for five-year-olds and, to a lesser extent, for four-year-olds is significantly lower than for three-year-olds. Unfortunately, because some provinces have difficulty in providing age breakdowns in the centres, we have had to rely to some extent on estimates. Therefore, the age breakdown is much less reliable than are the data on the number of spaces and the auspices of spaces. This is another area where research is sadly needed.

Part-time spaces in the four- and five-year-old categories are likely to increase.

Table 1 – Distribution of Centre Spaces, Family Day Care Spaces and Day Care Centres by Year

Number of Spaces	March 31, 1971	March 31, 1980	March 31, 1985	March 31, 1988	March 31, 1989	Increase Over 1988	
						No.	%
Centre Spaces	16 791	98 238	169 751	232 787	259 891	27 104	11.64
Family Day Care Spaces	600	10 903	22 623	30 839	38 192	7 353	23.84
Total Spaces	17 391	109 135	192 374	263 626	298 083	34 457	13.07
Day Care Centres	682	2 719	4 685	6 532	6 860		

Table 2 – Spaces in Day Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes by Age of Children Served (1989)

Ages*	Centres		Family Day Care Homes	
	No.	%	No.	%
0-18 months	8 801	3.39	7 137	18.69
18-36 months	25 264	9.70	9 010	23.60
3 years	75 066	28.90	4 729	12.40
4 years	46 923	18.05	4 760	12.46
5 years	36 626	14.09	4 684	12.26
6-10 years	63 701	24.51	6 870	17.99
10-13 years	3 510	1.35	1 002	2.62
Total	259 891	100.00	38 192	100.22

*Some provinces are not able to provide breakdowns by ages; in such cases, estimates have been provided.

Table 3 – Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1979, 1985 and 1989

Type of Sponsorship	1979		1985		1989	
	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces
Non-Profit	42 534	50.59	106 131	62.51	168 237	64.73
Commercial	41 549	49.41	63 631	37.49	91 654	35.27
Total	84 083	100.00	169 751	100.00	259 891	100.00

Table 4 – Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1988 and 1989

Type of Sponsorship	1988 Spaces	1989 Spaces	Increase	
			No.	%
Non-Profit	143 875	168 237	24 362	16.93
Commercial	88 912	91 654	2 742	3.08
Total	232 787	259 891	27 104	11.64

Table 5 – Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Spaces

Province	Centre Spaces	Family Day Care Spaces
Newfoundland	1 863	-
Prince Edward Island	1 478	35
Nova Scotia	5 773	123
New Brunswick	4 738	114
Quebec	69 805*	5 423
Ontario	97 038	10 000
Manitoba	10 220	2 310
Saskatchewan	3 705	1 758
Alberta	42 955**	11 819
British Columbia	21 020	6 480
Northwest Territories	684	42
Yukon	612	88
National Total	259 891	38 192

*29 139 of Quebec spaces are operated under the auspices of the Department of Education.

**Alberta provided data for preschool spaces and municipal officials provided estimates for school-aged spaces.

Table 6 – Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Centre Spaces by Auspices

Province	Non-Profit	Commercial	Total
Newfoundland	333	1 530	1 863
Prince Edward Island	795	683	1 478
Nova Scotia	3 244	2 529	5 773
New Brunswick	2 679	2 059	4 738
Quebec	59 849*	9 956	69 805
Ontario	62 886	34 152	97 038
Manitoba	9 013	1 207	10 220
Saskatchewan	3 646	59	3 705
Alberta	11 956	30 999**	42 955
British Columbia	12 961	8 059	21 020
Northwest Territories	514	170	684
Yukon	361	251	612
National Total	168 237	91 654	259 891

*29 139 of Quebec spaces are operated under the auspices of the Department of Education.

**Alberta provided data for preschool spaces and municipal officials provided estimates for school-aged spaces.

Table 7– Infant Day Care – Children 0-18 Months

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	317 374	5.02
Full-time working parents (1)	166 723	9.56
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	172 032	9.26
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week (3)	214 489	7.43

As of March 1989, there were 15 940 full-time day care spaces for children 0-18 months of age. As can be seen from the above four compilations, the percentage of children these spaces can serve differs according to which groups of parents are included in the compilation.

See Notes, page 7.

Table 8 – Children between the Ages of 18 Months and 36 Months

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	319 024	10.74
Full-time working parents (1)	162 876	21.04
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	171 625	19.97
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week (3)	217 448	15.76

As of March 1989, there were 34 274 full-time day care spaces for children between the ages of 18 months and 36 months.

See Notes, page 7.

Table 9 – Children between the Ages of 3 and 6 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	639 358	27.03
Full-time working parents (1)	337 549	51.19
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	359 844	48.02
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week (3)	450 835	38.33

As of March 1989, there were 172 788 day care spaces for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

See Notes.

Table 10 – Children between the Ages of 6 and 13 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 682 475	4.46
Full-time working parents (1)	980 436	7.66
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	1 036 141	7.25
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week (3)	1 287 447	5.83

As of March 1989, there were 75 083 day care spaces for school-age children.

Notes

1. This category includes lone parents working full time, and includes two-parent families in which both parents work full time.

2. This category includes full-time working parents, lone parents who are full-time students, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other is a full-time student, and two-parent families in which both parents are full-time students.

3. This category includes full-time working parents, student-parents, lone parents who work 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which one parent works full-time and the other works 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which both parents work 20 to 29 hours a week, and two-parent families in which one parent works 20 to 29 hours a week and the other is a full-time student.

Glossary

Centre care — Care given to groups of children in a licensed day care centre.

Commercial centre — A licensed day care centre that is set up as a proprietary operation. The term describes larger franchise operations, as well as small, individually owned centres.

Community board centre — A licensed day care centre that is established as a non-profit organization and is governed by a community board of directors.

Day care facility — For the purposes of this report, a licensed or provincially approved centre or private home providing care for children outside of their own home for eight to ten hours a day.

Family day care — A program involving the selection and supervision by a government or authorized private agency of private families who give care to children during the day.

Infant day care — Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children under the age of two.

Latch-key child — School-age child of working parents who carries house keys to gain entrance to home after school and before parents return from work.

Non-profit day care — For the purposes of this report, includes both community board centres and cooperative day care programs.

Preschool day care — Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children aged two to six.

Private or casual day care arrangements — Arrangements between the parent and the provider, such as those involving a private baby-sitter, which are not under the supervision of a licensing authority or day care agency.

Public day care — A licensed day care centre owned and operated by a municipal or provincial government.

School-age day care — Supervision of young school-age children before school begins, during the noon hour, after class, and on days when school is not in session.